

# THE BATTALION

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## Food Services to manage Underground

### Four brand-name vendors to operate in food court under Sbisa Dining Hall

By Jennifer Smith and Michele Brinkmann

THE BATTALION

Texas A&M Food Services will manage the upcoming Underground food court that will carry regional and national food chains.

Robert Smith, vice president for finance and administration, said that after months of receiving proposals from outside companies, he has asked Food Services to develop a proposal for the food court that will be located in the basement of Sbisa Dining Hall.

"If we are going to have brand names there, Food Services will run it," Smith said. "We could do it better ourselves."

Discussions were held with parties wanting to manage the Underground food court, but these discussions were concluded when it was apparent that Food Services could undertake the project, he said.

See Column . . . . . Page 11

Richard Floyd, interim director of Food Services, said private companies are out of the picture.

"It will be a Food Services operation," Floyd said. "We believe that our management can provide a quality product at a reasonable price."

When it was announced that A&M was looking for someone to manage the project in August 1992, Smith said many companies expressed an interest.

In fact, a proposal from ARA, a private food services company, was being considered until September, but those discussions have been "terminated," Smith said.

"ARA is not going to be running it," he said. "They have been notified that they will not be there."

Smith said ARA will not be involved in any further negotiations. But, he said, ARA is still involved with A&M through a partnership established in September between the University and Coca-Cola USA.

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—Richard Floyd,  
interim director of Food Services

ARA contracts with Coca-Cola for certain food and drink sales, he said. "Coca-Cola did contract with ARA, but under a different division," Smith said.

The University has not carried on any discussions involving ARA for any of the dining facilities on A&M's west campus, he said.

When it was apparent that the proposal from ARA for the Underground food court would not be accepted, Smith said he turned to Food Services, and representatives from Food Services then said they would submit a proposal.

Floyd said this proposal is almost ready. Two "big-name" vendors have committed to the project, and Food Services is now in negotiations with two more vendors, he said.

"If those two called today, I would have the proposal to the vice president (Smith) this week," Floyd said.

Smith said he expects a proposal, including the vendors names, from Food Services within a week. The proposal will also include how the food court will be run.

Besides the four brand-name vendors that will be represented in the 10,000 square foot facility, a yogurt vendor will also be included.

"We're seeking to get as much variety as we can," Smith said. The convenience store that is currently in the Underground will remain, but it will probably be modified.

Floyd said students will be able to use Aggie Bucks at the food court. The food court may also accept the lagniappe option, a partial credit towards a purchase that replaces part of the meal in the student's meal plan.

After Food Services submits its plan to Smith's office, Smith said he will inform students about the plan.

Tobin Boenig, speaker pro tempore of the Student Senate, said he is happy with Food Services running the project.

"We wanted it within A&M," he said. "I am glad that it ended up the way it did."

Boenig said Food Services has always been concerned with the student's needs and wants.

"Companies like ARA are just out for a profit," he said. "I like the idea of our needs coming first and not money first."

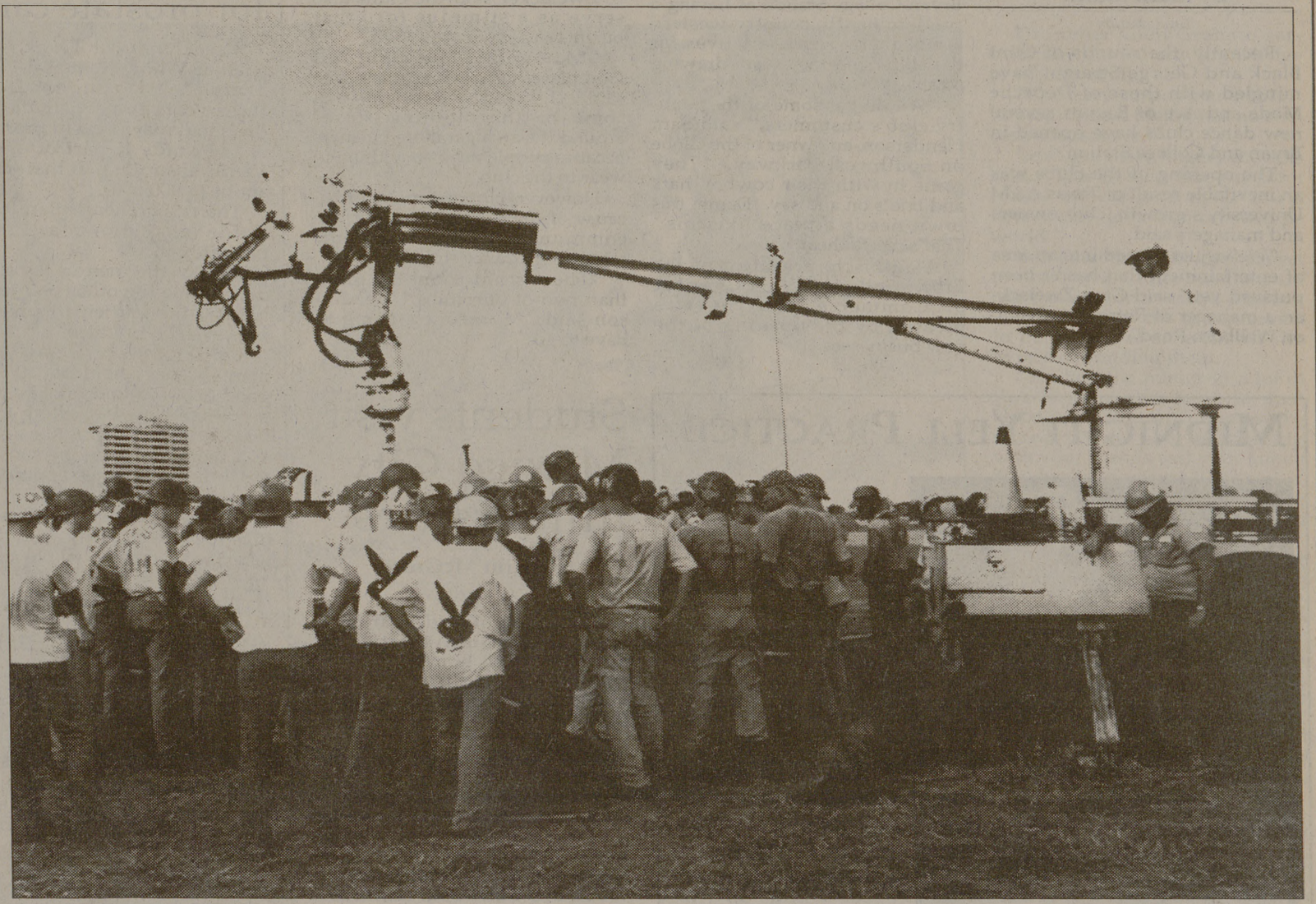
After Smith gets student input, a formal proposal will be drawn up for the administration and eventually be directed to the A&M Board of Regents.

"We hope to be able to fast track it from then on," Smith said. "We're anxious to get started. There will need to be extensive facility renovations."

Discussions about food chains at A&M began when students expressed an interest in this concept.

A survey conducted in November 1992 by the Public Policy Research Institute at A&M said 75 percent of the 507 students interviewed preferred the idea of a food court. In December 1992, the Student Senate passed a resolution calling for the development of a food court with brand name restaurants.

## Centerpole arrives today



Thanh Brennan/Special to THE BATTALION

A crowd gathers around to watch as a drill digs a hole for one of the four perimeter poles at Bonfire site on Wednesday. Centerpole is expected to arrive at 4:03 p.m. today. Bonfire will burn 34 days from now on November 24.

## STUDENT SENATE MEETING

### Proposal calls for parking garages to accept Aggie Bucks

By Kim McGuire

THE BATTALION

Off Campus Sen. Jennifer Simmons introduced a proposal Wednesday at the Student Senate meeting that would allow students to charge their parking garage fees to their Aggie Bucks accounts.

"Everyone in the Senate and all the constituents that I've talked to are in favor of the proposal," Simmons said. "Everyone thinks it's a good idea and wonders why it hasn't been implemented sooner."

Under the proposal, students could pay

parking garage fees with Aggie Bucks at each of the three parking garages. Only students using the garages on an hourly rate would be eligible to use Aggie Bucks.

Simmons said she drafted the proposal because she thought it would be more convenient for students.

"As a student living off campus, I use the garage almost every day," Simmons said. "In my opinion, it's not very convenient to have to carry a wad of cash to campus every day to pay for the garage fees. We can use Aggie Bucks for almost everything else. Why not this?"

Sen. Chad King said the proposal would be an excellent service to students.

"This is the best bill I've ever seen during my tenure, and I think it's really going to help the students at Texas A&M," King said. "To be honest, I have no idea why Aggie Bucks weren't implemented as soon as the garages became operational."

Sen. Dave Lilley said he didn't think the system would be difficult to install.

"It seems all that would have to be done to implement the system is to install Aggie Buck machines at the three teller booths in the garage," Lilley said. "The cost should be extremely minimal."

See Senate/Page 6

### UNT sorority receives 5-year suspension for hazing incident

The Associated Press

DENTON — A sorority has received a five-year suspension from the University of North Texas campus for hazing, a misdemeanor for which five of the sorority members were sentenced to 90-day jail terms last month.

The sorority will also be on probation for five years after the

suspension, the school announced Wednesday.

The university's dean of students and the AKA national office levied the penalties against Alpha Kappa Alpha.

"The AKA sorority will effectively cease operations on the UNT campus for the next decade as a result of repeated infractions of anti-hazing rules," the school said in a prepared statement.

The suspension started Oct. 18.

According to the sentence, AKA won't be able to solicit or accept new members, participate in service projects or hold local meetings until 1998. During the ensuing five-year probation period, meetings will be allowed at the UNT chapter, but only under the supervision of a graduate adviser.

The AKA national office issued the five-year probation period,

UNT announced.

Seven members of the sorority were charged with misdemeanor hazing.

Five of the members were convicted last month and sentenced to 90 days in jail. They were accused of striking the pledges with paddles and food and forcing them to eat hot peppers.

The two other members have not yet been tried.

## Confusing long-distance rates plague Aggies

By Geneen Pipher

THE BATTALION

Why does it cost an Aggie almost twice as much to call Brenham, than it does to call Los Angeles?

No, this is not the beginning to the latest Aggie joke, but a question many Texas A&M University students, faculty and Bryan-College Station residents are asking themselves.

Most residents are unaware that they could save 50 percent or more on their long-distance phone calls to cities within a few hundred miles of Bryan-College Station.

Currently, instead of going directly through an individual's long-distance carrier, calls to "short" long-distance destinations, such as Caldwell, Hearne and La Grange, are automatically routed through the local phone company, which charges customers for the call as opposed to their long-distance company.

Consumers could avoid the higher rates, but most people do not realize that they are paying more than they have to and have no idea how to take advantage of the savings. That is one of the reasons it costs Bryan-College Station residents up to \$1.65 for a five-minute, long-distance, evening call to neighboring Schulenburg while a call of similar length to Los Angeles, Calif. may cost only 75 cents.

The difference has many residents wondering why their local phone company is billing them for long-distance calls when they have separate long-distance carriers.

John Brickey, an administrative manager at Star Tel, said the Federal Communications Com-

mission (FCC) divided each state into regions in 1984, after the splitup of AT&T. Inside each region, all one-plus (1+) calls are automatically directed through and billed by the local phone company, which charges higher rates.

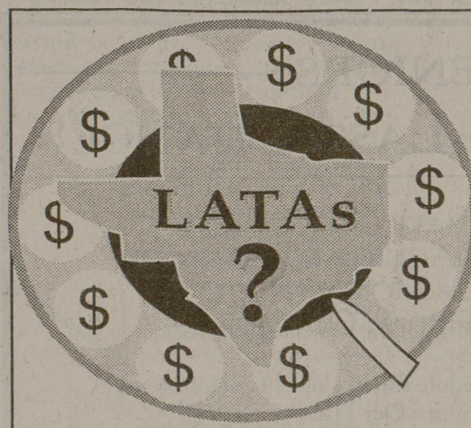
"Prior to 1984, the only company you could use when you picked up the phone to dial a one-plus call was AT&T," Brickey said. "Then in '84 when AT&T was dismantled, they had to give the phone companies some market areas, so they created these regions called Local Access Transport Areas (LATAs) with those agreements that were initially negotiated."

Michael May, a regional manager for University Communications Incorporated, said LATAs were created so local phone companies could maintain a portion of the long-distance calling market.

"When AT&T had its divestiture in 1984, the creation of LATAs was part of the give-and-take of the local operating companies to help soften the blow to the Bells," he said. "Since the Bells would no longer have access to the long-distance area, they at least had some kind of revenue coming in."

Although it is not widely known, May said, customers can bypass the local phone company and have their calls billed directly to their long-distance company.

"Every long-distance carrier has a code number, and if you find out what your preferred long-distance carrier's code is, you can get around the local phone company's charges," he said. "A customer would dial one plus zero plus their carrier's three-digit code to get around the local billing and get the cheaper rates."



Angel Kan/The BATTALION

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## Inside

### Aggielife

• Interview with Blind Melon; Rush and Pearl Jam reviews  
Page 3

### SPORTS

• Venetoulis, Bennett help A&M kick opponents  
Page 7

### OPINION

• Guest column: Hat etiquette different for women  
Page 11

### WEATHER

• Thursday: mostly cloudy windy and cool

• Forecast for Friday: partly cloudy, highs in the 60s

### TEXAS LOTTO

• Wednesday's winning Texas Lotto numbers: 3, 6, 7, 10, 31, 39